Semantic Classification of Sentences in English and Albanian languages

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Abstract

Most scholars agree on the sentence definition when they state that: the grammatical structure of words results in the construction of syntactic units, of which human speech is composed. Syntactic units can vary in form and content, composition and completeness of communication. The basic unit that manages to express a certain opinion is the sentence, which is the maximum and basic unit for syntactic analysis. As mentioned in all grammar books, it must be defined taking into account both the grammatical and semantic aspects of syntactic components. The purpose of this study is to highlight a number of issues related to the classification of sentences starting from their content. Sentences are classified according to the purpose of the sentence and their syntactic structure. Among the contentious issues of disagreement among linguists' different views regarding the classification of sentences according to purpose, based on normative and functional grammars of languages, four types of sentences are accepted demonstratives which are deep structures, where each element of the sentence is positioned in its place and serves to indicate something questions, which are classified into partial questions used in the language to ask for the missing information and complete questions used to ask if the statement is true or false. They are surface structures that emerge from the deep structure through transformational rules exclamatory sentences which are characterized by different intonations, depending on the emotions they express imperative sentences that express the will of the speaker in the form of orders, requests, advice, etc.

Keywords: sentence, classification, aim of the statement, structure

1. Introduction

All sentence definitions made in grammar books include the structure (grammar) and meaning (semantic). The meaning of the sentence is chronologically defined with different terms, usually with the words that the sentence is an expression of an opinion, but when the term "thought" is identified with the content of the term "judgment" of logic, then those statements defining feeling, will and questions will be left out (Çeliku, M. Domi, M. Floqi, S. Mansaku, S. Përnaska, R. Prifti, S. Totoni, M., 1997, 379).

According to us, based on the discussion of sentence definition in terms of its meaning, emphasis should be put on the fact that a sentence expresses a judgment, a question, a feeling or a desire, i.e. a relatively complete meaning.

The formal side of the sentence, i.e. lexical-grammatical and phonetic-grammatical part is related to the connection of words according to the rules of a language, types of syntactic connections (Lyons, J. Semantics, 1977, f. 467) that function in the sentence and features, such as ending intonation, characteristic intonation for a certain type of sentence. Sentence is usually discussed not only by traditional grammarians, but it has also been in the focus of most contemporary theories, generative and functional grammar. How do the latest grammar trends define the sentence?

Generativists define the sentence not only as a hierarchical union of syntagmatic syntactic categories, but they also analyse it through the rules of syntagm. A sentence is a unit obtained at two syntactic levels: the surface structure which derives from the deep structure through transformative rules. The phonological level constitutes another important aspect in the interpretation of the sentence; parallel to it is the semantic aspect. Over time, with the introduction of the minimalist program, generativists' opinions changed, as it was observed that some semantic aspects displayed a direct connection to the surface structure.

Embracing to some extent Saussure's linguistics theory, Bloomfield on the contrary, focuses his grammatical analysis on the word, not on the sentence. The sentence is the basic unit of syntactic analysis to him. The sentence is a syntactic construction and is defined as the maximum structure, which means that within a statement, it is not part of a larger structure (Bloomfield, 1984)

While Halliday bases his explanation on language usage stating that there are no maximum limits in grammar, but traditionally it stops at the sentence. According to him, it is the same syntactic unit, regardless of whether it functions as a single, independent (simple sentence) or as an integral part of a complex structure. The syntactic complex consists precisely of word to arrive at the sentence (Halliday, 2000).

For Halliday, words and sentences do not stand very far from each other, both are components of grammar. Words and sentences are elements of linguistic organization, which lies behind the structures presented concretely by symbols in written language and sounds in speech (Halliday, 1994).

The sentence is seen as the essence of syntax not only by Chomsky, Halliday, Bloomfield, but at the same time by many other traditional grammarians such as Jespersen, Harry, Huddleston, Biber, Quirk, Prifti, Cipo, Sheperi, etc. All these scholars share the opinion that any possible combination of separate words is possible only within the semantic circle of the sentence.

On the other hand, it is noted that the sentence definition and its notion is not fully completed in different grammar books.

Foreign grammarians define the sentence as following: Bloomfield (1924, 196) defines the sentence as the maximum construction of the statement while Obrecht (1999,20) limits the sentence by stating that it is a group of words, through which the expression of thought is realized. Obrecht's definition would be criticized by Chomsky's definition who states that the structure of a sentence is formed not by the linear order of the components, but according to their grammatical rules (Chomsky 1988, 45). Halliday, on the other hand, considers the sentence as a message, that is, in function of communication (Halliday, 2000:39). Communication is the key even for earlier linguists, such as Jespersen, who analyzes the sentence as its independent component (Jespersen 1933).

Quirk (1985), in his grammar book "A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language" defines the sentence as the most important part of grammar.

Huddleston and Pullum (2002) point out that one of the basic tasks of syntax is to study the ways in which words relate to each other to form sentences. According to him, the sentence is the maximum syntactic unit, from which the meaning of a statement is expressed.

Bieber, Konrad, Leach (2007) define the sentence as an independent unit and as one of the basic elements of syntax. "The speaker's judgment of an action or situation can be expressed even through a single sentence," they claim.

According to Albanian grammarians the sentence definition is based on its logic or its form.

J. Rrota (1942, 14) defines sentence as a thought. Sheperi (1927, 57) states that the sentence is the thought expressed through word. Xhuvani (1933, 72) and Cipo (1952, 28) agree with these definitions as well.

On the other hand, Prifti (1962) criticizes the above scholars as he puts emphasis on its structure. In Albanian language a more complete and scientific definition is found in normative grammar stating that a sentence is a fragment of discourse usually consisting of two or more meaningful words joined according to certain relations, based on the rules of a language, in a single semantic, grammatical and intonation basis".

2. Sentence Classification

There are agreement and disagreement regarding the sentence classification criteria: should it be based on its semantic grammatical criteria or structural intonational one, the term, division and subdivision into groups, the boundary and extent of one group or another.

In some English grammars, sentences according to the purpose of the sentence are classified into four types: a. demonstrative (indicative), b. question c. imperative d. exclamatory. In some other grammar books this number of sentences varies. Huddleston by subclassifying the question in a. open, b. closed distinguishes five types of sentences. Open questions get an unlimited number of answers, while closed question get an answer "Yes / No.

Functional grammar classifies sentences into a. demonstratives b. Yes/No questions c. Wh questions d. imperatives.

In Albanian normative grammar books, the sentences, according to the purpose of their statement are classified into four groups (Çeliku, M. Domi, M. Floqi, S. Mansaku, S. Përnaska, R. Prifti, S. Totoni, M. 1996: 408) a. demonstrative, b. question, c. imperative, d. exclamatory. Celiku's sentence classification has a wider scope. The sentences are classified into five types: a. Demonstrative, b. Question, c. Wish clauses, d. Imperative, e. Exclamatory.

Exclamatory sentences are a controversial issue. There are authors who classify them not as a separate group, but distribute them in other demonstrative, interrogative and imperative sentences. For example, Dhima classifies exclamatory sentences within the group of demonstratives. (Dhima, 2010, 54.)

Analysing sentences according to the purpose of the sentence, we adhere to the classification that normative and functional grammarians. We briefly present:

Indicative: In almost all grammar books, demonstrative sentences, with a syntactic structure "subject - predicate", are defined as sentences that serve to indicate something. The sentence is indicative if it lacks all the qualities that characterize other types of sentences, interrogative, imperative, exclamatory. Demonstratives are used in all styles of literary language, fiction, scientific, journalistic style, prose, novels, stories etc.

1.You were just four.   Ju ishit vetëm katër.
2. He is so dramatic in English class.   Ai është shumë dramatik në orën e anglishtes.
3.You look great today.   Dukesh mirë sot.
4. It wouldn't be very serious.   Nuk do të ishte shumë serioze.

Demonstratives (1-3) are positive, (4) is negative. In all of these sentences the intonation is declining from beginning to end. In Albanian, unlike English, which is a free order language, the intonation can change according to the order of the elements of the sentence and according to the order of the statement, taking in these cases different communicative values and special stylistic uses.

Questions are used in spoken and written discourse (i) to ask for missing information (wh questions), (ii) to ask if the statement is true or false (yes/no questions), (iii) to ask about the right alternative (tag questions). Through interrogative sentences the speaker seeks to learn something he does not know or to ascertain the truth of a fact. They are characterized by clear distinguishing features, such as intonation, interrogative words, and wordorder (Huddlestone, R, Pullum, G. 2002: 856).

Example [2]
1. How was your trip, Nick?   Si ishte udhëtimi, Nik? (wh question)
2. Is that adorable?   A është e admirueshme? (yes/ no question)
3. Mary is generous, isn't she?   Ajo është bujare, apo jo? (tag question)

Question (1) in both languages is formed with a wh- word "How / Si". The verb shifts before the subject; as a result, we have an inversion of order, predicate - subject. Question (2) is yes/no one. In English the verb has an initial position, while in Albanian the question starts with the particle "A". In Albanian language other particles are used for yes/ no questions such as vallë, mos, mos vallë etc.

Tag question (3) in Albanian language is incomplete sentence (without a subject or verb)

Generativist analyses questions as surface structures of deep structures formed by transformational rules of Wh movement.

Your trip was wonderful.   Udhëtimi yt ishte i mrekullueshëm.
Your trip was how.   Udhëtimi yt ishte Si.
How was your trip?   Si ishte udhëtimi yt?

According to functionalists the theme is inserted in *Wh* word.

How   was your trip, Nick?
Si   ishte udhëtimi yt, Nik?
Theme   Rheme

In yes/no question the theme includes not only the verb but the subject as well.

Is   She   adorable?
Është   Ajo   e admirueshme?
Theme (1)   Theme (2) Rheme

In exclamatory sentences, the affective attitude of the speaker, the expression of his/her feelings, such as joy, sorrow, surprise, irony, etc. are conveyed. In the initial position of the sentence stands *Wh*-word.

Exclamatory sentences have different intonations depending on the emotions they express,
1. What a disaster it was!   Çfarë shkatërrimi ishte!
2. How clever that girl is!   Sa e zgjuar është ajo vajzë!
3. How happy would he be!   Sa i lumtur do të ishte ai!

Imperative sentences (i) are limited to the main sentence; (ii) in the second person the subject is usually absent; (iii) the verb is used in its basic form; (iv) in English the negative imperative sentences the auxiliary verb "do" is used, although its main verb is the verb "be / jam".
2. Don't be late.   Mos u vono.

3. (You) look after yourself.   Kujdesu për veten.

3. Conclusion

We conclude this study with the view that in addition to the different opinions given on the notion of sentence, in our opinion, it is the basic syntactic unit, which is the main tool, the main way of shaping, expressing and communicating thought.

As we have seen above, most scholars agree on the definition of a sentence when they state that: the grammatical use of words results in the construction of syntactic units, of which human speech is composed. Syntactic units can vary in form and content, composition and completeness of communication.

Through detailed sentence reviews, this part of the paper highlighted a number of issues related to sentence classification starting from its inner part. Among the contentious issues of disagreement of different views of linguists regarding the classification of sentences according to purpose, based on normative and functional grammars of languages, we accepted four types of sentences. 1. Demonstratives which are deep structures, where each element of the sentence is positioned in its place and serves to indicate something. 2. Questions, which are classified into *wh* questions that are used in language to ask for missing information and yes/no questions that are used to ask if the statement is true or false. They are surface structures that emerge from the deep structure through transformational rules. 3. Exclamatory sentences which are characterized by different intonations, depending on the purpose of statement. 4. Imperative sentences that express the will of the speaker in the form of orders, requests, advice, etc.

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